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SECURITY AND ON THE RECORD

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6 Oct. 1952

TO : Chief, EE
(ATTN: Chief, SR)

FROM : Chief of Base, Munich

SUBJECT: ~~SECRET~~ - RABOLUK/ Operational

Source - ABJIOR/ Reports on Belorussian Emigre Groups

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DATE	6 Oct. 1952
Re: [unclear]	[unclear]
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1. Transmitted herewith are reports concerning the following subjects:

- Brief Biography of Radoslaw Ostrowski
- The Belorussian Central RABOLUK, Past and Present
- One of the Resources in the Struggle against Bolshevism

2. The attached reports were prepared by Radoslaw Ostrowski for a sum of 150 RM. Authorization for this expenditure was requested in reference, para 3 (d) (6).

Approved:

[Signature]

DCM/abh

Distribution:

V2 - SR w/1 copy of attach.

1 - EE

3 - COS [unclear] w/1 copy of attach.

2 - MCB

3 attachments herewith.

FORM NO. 51-28A
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Brief Biography of Radoslav Ostrovski

I was born Oct. 25, 1887, in the Nesvizhski raion, Slutski uyezd, Minsk province. My father was a small landowner.

After completing elementary school I entered the Slutsk Classic Gymnasium (highschool), which I completed in 1908.

When I was still in the Gymnasium I became acquainted with Nikolai Ochapovski, Polikarp Shvruk, and Yevgeeni Shpilavski, who were then already students at the Petersburg University, are now old friends of mine. They belonged to a group of so-called "nashanitsy" and worked in the Belorussian Socialist Granada. The word "nashanitsy" comes from the name of the first newspaper published in the Belorussian language, which first came out in Vilna in 1905.

The struggle against autocracy, which was oppressing the peasant masses in Belorussia and the struggle for education in the native language engulfed me completely.

Thanks to my energy and courage, I rose from the ranks of party workers to presidency of the Belorussian Socialist Granada for the Slutsk district in short time.

In 1908 I entered the physico-mathematic faculty of the Petersburg University, and in September of that year I was selected by the president of the Slutsk association of compatriots and joined the presidium of the association of compatriots at the university. My material circumstances were difficult, since I had to earn money and study at the same time, but nonetheless I passed all of the exams at the end of the year and the following year I received an allowance.

In 1911 I was arrested for participation in underground work and the administration deported me to the city Pruzhanyi in the Grodnenskaya Province, under surveillance by the police, which transported me there from prison. I was forbidden to enter Petersburg, the Moscow Guberniya (province), Finland, or any university town.

In Pruzhanyi I made the acquaintance of a railroad engineer, Mikhail Charnotski, who is a distant relative of my wife's. I borrowed money from him for a theodolite (TN surveying instrument) and took up land surveying. The work went very well. This helped to make me economically independent.

In 1913 I obtained permission to take the state examinations at the university, since I had already received a certificate of graduation when I was arrested. However they would not permit me to live in Petersburg, but I was allowed to take the examinations at the Dorpat University. I received my diploma in August 1913 and was given the position of teacher of mathematics and physics at the Chenshtokhovski Gymnasium.

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In the summer of 1914 the first World War began, Chenstokhov was occupied by the Germans, and I was sent to the Minsk Gynnasium Zubakin and Falkovich. At the same time I taught at the female Gynnasium Skorodnikova and at the Jewish trade school Khaikin.

In 1915 I was appointed to the post of teacher at the Minsk Pedagogical Institute, where Prof. V. Ignatovski (later People's Commissar of Enlightenment) was the history professor.

In 1916 the institute was evacuated to Yaroslavl, where I was a teacher at the trade school and read lectures on mathematics at the Yaroslavl Pedagogical Institute and at pedagogical courses.

In March 1917, right after the revolution, I left Yaroslavl and returned to Slutsk. In May I was selected by the Uyezd (district) Commissar of the interim government. The peasants of the Slutsk Uyezd knew me well from my work with Belorussian Socialist Groups. I was at this post until the October revolution. Then I was appointed director of the Slutsk Belorussian Gynnasium, which was founded by the Slutsk Zemstvo (district council) at my instigation. At the same time I was chairman of the Belorussian National Committee.

In August 1917 I was the delegate from the Minsk province to the Moscow State Conference, which was organized by the prime minister of the Interim Government, Kerensky.

On Feb. 22, 1918, Slutsk and all of Belorussia as far as Oshl was under German occupation. On Dec. 4th of the same year the Germans abandoned Slutsk, and the Bolsheviks were settling the score with those who were opposed to them. I decided to go south, and at the end of Dec. I arrived in Mariupol, in the Ekaterinoslavskaya province, where I enlisted in the volunteer army. The Mariupol detachment was shattered near Volnovakha and the remains were joined to the Fifth Infantry Division of Gen. Vinogradov.

In May, 1919, I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and attached to divisional headquarters as intelligence officer.

By Dec. 1919 the situation had become so bad that we were compelled to retreat westward. We retreated as far as Voitovtzi, 10 km. from Podvolochiska (in Galicia), which was then already occupied by the Poles. On Dec. 15 the last train with Polish evacuees arrived in Podvolochisk from Kiev, and I received permission to go on leave, from which there was nothing to return to.

I arrived in Brest by way of Tarnov, Lvov, and Kovel, and proceeded from there to Slutsk, where my wife and children were living. The city was occupied by the Poles, but the Belorussian Gynnasium was still operating. I was again invited there by the director.

In the beginning of June 1920 the Bolsheviks were advancing on Slutsk and my family and I evacuated to the City Pruzhany, where I had my own house.

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When I was still in Slutsk I got into contact with former Belorussian servicemen and we decided to take up arms against the Bolsheviks. Prokulevich was elected president of the Slutsk Rada (council); his deputy was Vasili Rusak, who later worked as engineer in Prague. I was commissioned to get into contact with whatever forces were fighting the Bolsheviks in the West. In Nov. the Slutsk insurrection occurred. There was only one company of insurgents, but the frame of mind of the population was such that while the company was on its way to Semeshava, 28 km. west of Slutsk, it was transformed into an army of more than 10,000 men. In Brest I was able to make connection with one of Balakhovich's detachments, which was marching in the direction toward Luninets and Mozyr. At the end of Oct. we occupied Mozyr and the Belorussian Government, headed by Adamovich was formed. Our forces had gotten into touch with the Slutsk insurgents, when suddenly the Poles changed their minds and deprived us of ammunition and then interned us in Lodz.

The Slutsk insurrection was put down and the insurgents went underground, but the last group of 18 men did not give up the struggle against the Bolsheviks until 1929. This group was in the Rudenska area.

From Oct. 25, 1920 to Nov. 1, 1923, I worked on the Polish-American Committee for children's relief, first as chief of the Pinsk Uyezd and later as inspector general for the Eastern Mkrug (district), which included five voyevodstvo (provinces): Poleskoye, Novogrudskoye, Belostokskoye, Vilenskoye, and Lutskoye. My immediate superior was an American by the name of Maurice Wright, who is now in America. It seems to me he worked together with former president Hoover. Inspectors for the American line were Mr. Thompson (col. in the American army, age 60) and Mr. Reynolds, at that time age 35. The American Committee was liquidated Nov. 1, 1923, and I was selected for the vice-presidency in Brest, but I was there only three weeks because the Belorussian activists wanted me to take over the Vilna Belorussian Gymnasium, the directors of which did not want to approve Poles for lack of suitable qualifications.

While I was director of the Vilna Belorussian Gymnasium, I also became chairman of the Association of Belorussian Schools, which was occupied with the enlightenment and education of the masses. At that time we already had our Belorussian representatives in the Polish Diet and senate, who composed the so-called Belorussian Ambassadors' Club. In 1926 the club broke up, the left socialist group withdrawing and organizing its own club, which it called the Belorussian Peasant and Workers' Granada. Its program did not differ from that of other Polish socialist parties. The head of this party was my friend from the university, Prof. Bronislav Tarashkevich, and Sobolevski, Rak-Mikhailovski, Myatla, and Voloshin were among the members.

The central committee of the party was composed of the president, B. Tarashkevich, plus Ostrovski, Sobolevski, Rak-Mikhailovski, Myatla, Voloshin, and the secretary, Maksim Bursevich.

The party was enormously successful among the masses of the Belorussian people and soon acquired a membership of 121,000. The Polish government and the Communist Party of western Belorussia became alert to our influence and

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the Communist Party of course wanted to bring our leadership over to their side. We refused. The party was then attacked from two sides: the Poles accused us of being communist, and the Bolsheviks gave them every possible assistance in their provocation. On Jan. 14, 1927, the entire central committee of the party and many of its members were arrested, and on May 22, 1928 they were sentenced. Some of them were condemned and others released. I was among those released.

I was deeply convinced of the injustice of the sentence against the Gromadov people, and through prolonged effort I was finally able to convince Polish social and political circles that the material on the basis of which they had been convicted was derived from Polish police and Communist provocation.

As a result of my efforts, all of those convicted were released. Unfortunately the Poles did not return to them all of the rights of which they had been deprived by the court and they were heckled by the Bolsheviks and went to the Soviet Union. Within two to three years they were all deported to Solovki and died at the hands of the NKVD.

In 1935 the new Vilna voyevod (governor of a province) came to regard me as a threat to his voyevodstvo because I was propagandizing for the Belorussian school, which was guaranteed us by the Polish constitution. There was no legal basis for bringing me to trial, so another method was resorted to, and I was transferred to a teaching position far in the interior of Poland, namely in Lodz, which is where I found myself at the beginning of the war between Poland and Germany. Further details on my work are contained in the report The Belorussian Central Rada, Past and Present.

Supplement: My wife was arrested and deported by the Bolsheviks in 1939 and died in 1941, at the railroad junction #61 on the line from Busuluk to Etishchevo. My son escaped from the Soviets in 1941 and joined the Polish Army, which had been formed in the Soviet Union by Gen. Anders, and then reached England by way of Irak, Persia, Egypt, Palestine, and Italy. He is now working in England.

My daughter and her husband and children are in Argentina, where they emigrated in 1948. They practice medicine in San Luis.

I may have distant relatives in Soviet Belorussia, but that is doubtful. They have probably all suffered reprisals on my account. My two sisters were deported beyond the Urals in 1926 and nothing has been heard from them since.

Aug. 22, 1939

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The Belorussian Central Rada (Council).

Past and Present

X Before proceeding with a discussion of the organization of the BCR (Belorussian Central Rada) I should like to make a brief resume of the circumstances leading to the establishment of the council.

The war between Germany and Poland, which began Sept. 1, 1939, started at the time when I was in the city Lodz, where I was a teacher at the state gymnasium (high school) in the name of Kopernik. My family, consisting of wife, daughter, and son, were living near Vilna (in the Vilna colony) at the time, where I had my own summer place.

From the beginning of war I was cut off from my family. On September 17 the Red Army occupied Vilna and every connection was thus broken off. On Dec. 5, 1939 I received a letter (via Rvno) from my former secretary Albert Miller saying that on Oct. 2nd my wife and son had been arrested by the NKVD and that my daughter was in hiding in Litva. Considerably later, when the Soviets temporarily left Vilna, I established contact with my daughter, who was then working as a doctor in a small town called Aukstadvaris, Lithuania, and I heard from her that my wife and son had been moved into the interior of the USSR and that my son had been sentenced to 8 years and my wife to 5 years in a corrective labor camp. My son was in the camp at Ukhta Izhemskaya in the Pechorski area and my wife in a settlement called Yavas in the Mordovskaya Republic, not far Potma, the nearest RR station.

Almost all of the Belorussians were pleased by the Red Army's occupation of western Belorussia. This was due to Belorussian dissatisfaction with Polish policy, which in 1939 was aimed at the assimilation of western Belorussia.

Soon however everyone was convinced that his rejoicing had been ill-founded. Arrests and deportations of bourgeois elements were undertaken and included counter-revolutionary elements.

A mass flight from Belorussia to the German zone of occupation in Poland. Among those who fled were: (Dr.) Nikolai V Shchors, (Prof.) Nikolai Shkelenok, V. Godlevski, Yanka Stankovich, (Dr.) Vitold Tumash, and others. Some of them remained in Warsaw. They were: Dr. Shchors, who was taken on at a German hospital, Godlevski, and Yanka Stankovich. Together with Belorussians who were already in Warsaw they organized a Belorussian Committee and elected Dr. Shchors chairman and Godlevski vice-chairman.

Prof. Shkelenok and V. Tumash left Warsaw and went on to Germany. Tumash wanted to complete study for his medical degree at the Berlin University, and Shkelenok had been urged to come there by the engineer Anatol Shkutko to work on the editorial board of the Belorussian paper Raritsa.

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At the end of September 1939 I undertook the organization of a Belorussian Committee, since the Germans were demanding that all non-Poles form their own national organizations. However the greatest impulse propelling all nationalities to the formation of national organizations was the relation of the Germans to the Poles and Jews. These two nationalities were treated worst of all by the Germans. For instance, the Poles were given the worst ration cards, whereas the Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians received the same kind as the Volksdeutschen (Germans who were citizens of other countries).

Our Belorussian Committee soon grew to 800 members. Our dues soon brought in a considerable amount of money (about 4,000 marks). Most of our members worked at the factories in Scheibler and Groman and had come here from Belorussia in search of jobs. Similar Belorussian committees were founded in Poznan and Krakow. So-called Vertrauensstellen began to function - Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, headed by the engineer Shkutko, and Georgian, headed by Kediya.

I suggested to Shkutko organizing a central Belorussian committee in Berlin, which would unite all of the existing Belorussian committees. This was in fact done.

At the same time Abramchik, who was living in Paris, apparently got into contact with the German Gestapo after the Germans occupied Paris and one fine day the Gestapo brought Abramchik to Berlin to work on the Belorussian paper Ranitsa. However their hopes for Abramchik on the paper did not work out and furthermore a Belorussian Nazi by name of Akinchits Fabian was already working with the Germans and trying to obtain for the Germans an issue of the Belorussian magazine Rekha, which was published in Paris under the editorship of Abramchik and followed a purely communist line. Abramchik went through a lot of unpleasantness in this connection by Shkutko was able to persuade the Germans not to touch Abramchik. The Germans agreed but stipulated that he was not to be connected with the paper. It was decided to leave Abramchik in the department of mutual assistance of the Belorussian Committee, which is where he was working.

In the beginning of 1941 the Germans became interested in the Belorussian and Ukrainian organizations for a different reason, namely: the suggested that we organize a parachute detachment to be dropped on the other side of the demarcation line. A school was organized in Ostrolenka (not far from Lomzhi in Poland) under the direction of (Maj.) Gerulis and (Capt.) Kozlovski. There were three Belorussian groups of 10 to 11 men each. None of us were admitted to participation in this operation. On the night of June 21, 1941, all of these groups were dropped in the Belostok area, but only group remained whole, a group of eleven men, and only three wounded remained alive from the other groups.

At this time Tumash had completed his studies at the university and was sent as junior doctor to a hospital for refugees in Lodz. Here I offered him the chairmanship of our Belorussian Committee since I myself was occupied with Belorussian courses for young people. Dr. Tumash agreed and we worked together in harmony. Tumash was my pupil at the Vilna Belorussian Gymnasium.

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At the beginning of the German-Soviet war I suggested to Tumash that he try to get into Belorussia. The Germans did not allow anyone to go at that time, and I personally had no contacts. Tumash communicated with Dr. Shchors, who was in close contact with the Warsaw Gestapo, and received from him a subsidy for the Warsaw Committee. The Lodz Committee was not in need of subsidy, because we had a lot of our own money.

On June 29, that is, a week after the beginning of the war, Tumash Shchors invited Tumash to come to Warsaw. I asked him not to forget the necessity of our getting to Belorussia. In the evening of July 1st Tumash telephoned me from Warsaw and asked me to prepare to get under way. On July 3, at night, the Gestapo called for me with an official car and toward morning of July 4th we were already in Warsaw. There Tumash met me and said that he was going to Minsk via Belostok and I was to go to Minsk via Brest, Pinsk, Gomel, Bobruisk, in view of the fact that I knew these areas well and had many acquaintances there.

On the evening of the same day a group of 4 other Belorussians and I set off for Lublin, and thence for Brest. Our assignment was to organize local self-government in Belorussian territory. Having left Brest, however, I got only as far as Pinsk. The road to Gomel was still held by the Bolsheviks and I had to return to Brest and take a train to Minsk. I arrived in Minsk July 13, 1941, where I met Tumash, who had already become the burgomaster of Minsk. I myself am a native of the Minsk province, Slutski uyezd (district). In 1908 I finished the Slutsk Classic Gymnasium. From 1914 to 1917 I taught at the Minsk Gymnasium and at the Minsk Pedagogical Institute. From 1917 to 1920 I was director of the 1st Belorussian Gymnasium in Slutsk and, up to the October revolution, Uyezd Commissar of the Keronsky's temporary government. Thus I had a large circle of acquaintances in the whole Minsk province. My students were grown and they looked me up when I arrived in Minsk.

Taking into account my knowledge of the territory and the people, Military Administration Headquarters assigned me to the organization of a Minsk District Administration. This task was easy for me because I had acquaintances in almost every district and area. Exactly a week later, having been supplied with military transport, I had been able to organize 21 raions in the Minsk oblast. This astonished and impressed the Germans, who then asked me to include the city Minsk in the general administration.

I refused, not wanting to spoil my relations with Tumash, who was young and ambitious. Shortly Kodlevski, Prof. Ivanovski, and Dr. Ermachenko arrived from Prague. They all aspired to leadership, an infection they had caught from Hitler. Quarrels arose. At this same time (Sept. 1941) Minsk was transferred to civilian administration and the commissar for Belorussia, gauleiter Kube, arrived in Minsk. The Militärverwaltung (military administration), headed by Kraatz, whose assistant was Maj. Benkendorf, told me to turn over the affairs of the District Administration to the General Commissariat for Belorussia and at the same introduced me to Kube, who was chief of the Commissariat. He asked me to stay in my position and continue to handle the matters that came up. The office was to be renamed a Nebenstelle (local station). The German civil administration was to work with the same departments. I pointed out to Kube the stupidity of such a plan and proposed that each office be connected directly with my department. Kube agreed to this, but when everything had been arranged I was left with only one statistics department, which did not exist under the then civil administration system.

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I then told Kube that there was actually nothing for me to do and asked to be released so that I could work at my profession. He refused but offered me the contemporaneous position of rector at the Pedagogical Institute and asked me to take over the organizing of the institute. I agreed to this willingly and Kube promised me all possible support. He ordered one of his officials to furnish me immediately with suitable premises for the institute.

I selected the one suitable building that was vacant at the time. It was formerly a chemical institute, but despite all efforts to obtain this building the results were negative. When the official somehow did obtain orders for this building, it was taken over by the district commissar. It became evident that it would be difficult to work with the Germans.

At the same time friction arose in the Nebenstelle and the Germans were interfering everywhere, not taking into consideration the interests of the Belorussian population. I called this to the attention of Mr. Kube. He promised to investigate, but every day matters became worse.

When I met my former colleagues in the Military Administration Headquarters, Kraatz and (Maj.) Benkendorf, I found out that it would be difficult to work with the civil administration. Kraatz suggested that I quit my present position and work with the Kriegsverwaltung of a division that was then being allowed a rest period but which was preparing to leave for Bryansk. I said that I would give him a final decision somewhat later, since I still hoped to be able to organize the pedagogical institute.

October passed, and dissatisfaction grew among the Belorussians. Yanka Stankevich reported to the SS Security Service on Godlevski, Godlevski on Stankevich, and Prof. Ivanovski on various people. I remained on the sidelines in these quarrels but I could not leave because we were all in the same Belorussian organization.

During dinner on Oct. 30 the German police called on me at my quarters and said that they had been ordered by the chief of the German police to take away my radio. My radio was playing music at the time. I said that I did not have a radio. The policeman was very surprised at this and pointed to the radio, saying "But there it is!" I answered that it didn't belong to me but to the man who was at the table with us. This was my former student, Vladimir Shavel, former officer in the Polish army, who was now working for the Abwehrkommando 707, which was headed by (Maj.) Kribits. Shavel confirmed me in this and showed the policeman a certificate in which it was stated that he was authorized to listen to foreign broadcasts when he was alone in his room. The policeman was disconcerted, saluted, and left. An hour later Maj. Benkendorf called on me for a final answer, since the Military Administration Headquarters was supposed to leave Oct. 31 for Bryansk.

I immediately gave Benkendorf an affirmative answer and wrote a letter to Kube saying that I could not work when his police came to rob me. The letter was in correct form but the language was somewhat sharp and Benkendorf advised me to leave the letter with Shavel for transmission to Kube when we were no longer in the city. That is what I agreed to do. Later, Kraatz, who came to

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Bryansk from Minsk, where he had gone on business, warned me to be careful about going to Minsk, because Kube had threatened to have me hanged. A year later, I was in Minsk and Kube did not hang me; he even sent me New Year's greetings and said that he considered the incident closed. Apparently Kraatz had convinced him that he was wrong.

We arrived in Bryansk Nov. 2 and there I organized a local District Self-Government. I was in Bryansk until April 20, 1942, and then moved to Smolensk with Kraatz to organize the Smolensk District Administration. I was there until June, 1943. At that time Tesmer invited me to the council of ministers under the supreme commander and asked me to go to Mogilev to do the same kind of organizing, since there the local military administration was unable to deal with the question.

It was not long in Mogilev. I organized a district administration there and an officers' school for the training of commanders for four units of so-called Ordnungsdienst (provost service), which were supposed to fight against the partisans. In October I fell ill and went on leave to Baranovich, where my daughter and her husband, both of them doctors at the Baranovich hospital, lived.

I stayed in Baranovich until December 19, when I unexpectedly received a telegram from a friend of mine, the former ambassador of the Polish Diet, Yuri Sobolevski, asking me to come to Minsk immediately. I was struck by the fact that the telegram had been received through the District Commissariat and brought to me by an official of the Commissariat, Mr. Michke. This was at 11 at night. I told Michke that I would leave the next day, since the only train for Minsk left at 12 noon. He replied that a place had already been reserved for me on a military train that passed through Baranovich at three in the morning and he promised to send a car by for me.

At eight in the morning of Dec. 20 I was already in Minsk, at Sobolevski's apartment, and he told me the reason for his urgent request. At nine in the morning the Belorussian activists, including Shkelenki and Kosyak, met here on the premises of the Belorussian Self-Aid Committee, whose chairman was Sobolevski.

Shkelenok was the speaker. In his report he outlined the contemporary situation. The gist was that up to that time there had been a Vertrauensrat (confidential council) at the General Commissariat, consisting of Sobolevski, Shkelenok, Kosyak, and many others. This council had been formed by Dr. Ermachenko when Kube was alive. Recently an unpleasantness had occurred at one of the meetings of this council. The Belorussians began to complain of the conduct of the German district commissars and various district administrators. The Germans had not expected this and closed the meeting, claiming to have urgent business. The council did not meet again for a long time, but the situation in Belorussia became worse every day: the partisan movement was growing, murder was rampant, trains were blown up, and roads were mined. Finally the commissar Kube himself was killed, and then the burgomaster Prof. Ivanovski. The Germans saw that something had to be done but they did not know how to go about it. Finally Gen. von Gottberg turned to the Belorussian activists who were on the Vertrauensrat and asked them to reorganize this council into a more authoritative independent Belorussian agency with incomparably greater authority. Discussions were being held on this matter, principally with Sobolevski and Shkelenki. The Germans

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drew up in brief the statutes for this organization and asked the Belorussian activists to submit a candidate for the chairmanship. When I pointed out that all of these steps were being taken about 2 years too late they said that there was no other way out and that if we were to refuse even greater reprisals could be expected. After prolonged discussion it was decided to agree to the German proposal but to make certain stipulations. No final decision was reached in regard to the candidate and the question was postponed until evening, that is, until after a conference with the general commissariat, which had been set for 12 o'clock of the same day, Dec. 20. We had, however, limited the candidates to three: I, Sobolevski, and Shkelenko, one of whom was to be chairman and the other two vice-chairmen.

Among the Germans taking part in the conference were the chief of the Minsk SS Security Service, Sopp, and the chief of the personnel section, Dr. Markus. Von Gottberg was supposed to arrive later. Our side was represented by me, Shkelenok, and Sobolevski. The latter were acquainted with the German representatives and introduced me. Being new to the situation, I was supposed to take the lead in talking to the Germans. I told the Germans that some of what I had to say might be unpleasant for them. I said that their proposal had come two years late, but that we were willing to collaborate, although if we did it would have to mean an end to the outrages perpetrated by the Germans on our people. The senseless burning of villages, the shootings of the population, all of this would have to cease. I had with me a list of the most shocking acts committed by German police, gendarmes, district commissars, and others. We further asked to be allowed to protect our territory ourselves against the partisans, and for that purpose we would have to have our own armed forces. The Germans paid careful attention to what I had to say and when I finished Dr. Markus thanked me for being frank and said "For the first time since we have been here we have heard what, although it is unpleasant, is the truth. We believe you when you say that this is true. Both your workers and ours have been telling us Jawohl, alles ist in Ordnung (everything is O.K.), but we feel that matters have been getting worse every day."

He continued by saying that the general commissar intended to turn over administrative matters gradually to the Belorussian Central Rada, but that in the meantime he wanted to know who our candidate for chairman of the Council was. Shkelenok and Sobolevski indicated me, deciding to take the posts of vice chairmen themselves. This was unexpected for me, because I had thought that Sobolevski would be more suitable for the position. The Germans willingly accepted my candidature, but I began to refuse for reasons of health. It is true that I was looking well at the time, and they said that they only wished they had my health at my age. I advanced a further argument, that I worked at the front all of the time, with the greens (refers to color of uniform), and that I would not be able to work with the yellows (persons in the civil administration, whose uniforms were of that color). In reply to this I was promised that I would not have to have anything to do with the yellows and that I would deal exclusively with them who, as servicemen in the Reichsgestapo-dienst (Gestapo Security Service), wore green uniforms.

In conclusion Mr. Markus said that it was my duty to my people to accept this position. I gave him my agreement and we set the time for the conference with Gen. Gottberg for 6 o'clock in the evening, since he had been detained outside the city.

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We met at the appointed time at von Gottberg's office. He read aloud to us the BCh statutes, which consisted of 6 points. I again brought up the question of Belorussian armed forces and he agreed to my demand. I made two further requests: 1) that our army was to fight only on the eastern front against the bolsheviks and 2) that within 6 mos. they would help us to form a second Belorussian congress. The first point was accepted without discussion, but they granted the second one unwillingly.

The next day, Dec. 21, 1943, a celebration was attended by 300 Belorussian activists at which Gottberg read aloud the statutes and announced my appointment.

According to the statutes, the BCh was to consist of 15 persons and the president. At a meeting we three invited two captains, Kushel and Pavel Svirid (president of the court in Baranovichi) to be members of the Rada. When the Rada had been staffed the membership read as follows:

1. R. Ostrowski, president.
2. Yu. Sobolevski, 1st vice-president.
3. N. Shkolenok, 2nd vice president.
4. F. Kushel, military section.
5. P. Svirid, court.
6. Petr Orsa, economy and cooperation.
7. Yevgeni Kolubovich, culture and enlightenment.
8. Dr. Grinkevich, health.
9. Semen Kandyibovich, business administrator.
10. S. Voklyadka)
11. Stankevich) professional union representatives.
12. U. Rodzka, youth, and later military.
13. Dr. Teodorovich - female youth.
14. Ganko - male SM
15. Vacant - reserved for (col) Yezovitev, who was then still in Latvia (Riga). He joined the Rada after the congress.

Organizational matters took up about a month and on Jan. 22, 1944 a public meeting of the Rada took place, attended by Germans, the clergy, and the civilian population. My Council declaration was made public at this meeting. In addition to the matter of taking over from the Germans such departments as public education, local self-government, the courts, and so forth, I called attention to the organization of the armed forces and furnishing them with the necessary weapons and ammunition. The work of the council had loud repercussions in places, but the Germans kept their word and there were no further outrages. On March 10 I issued an order for mobilization in the Belorussian Krai (district) Defense. I knew that we would have to count on the good will of the people, since we had no executive power. Each could choose for himself whether he was going to join us or the partisans. The Germans were very skeptical about our undertaking and when I predicted that we could count on the enlistment of 10,000 soldiers, von Gottberg said he did not think the number would exceed 2 to 3 thousand.

What was their surprise, when within three days 28,000 people had shown up for induction!

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Gen. Goltberg congratulated me but asked where he was to find arms and ammunition, inasmuch as he had been counting on 3,000 recruits and had not made preparations for more than 5,000. Where was he to get hold of uniforms? Food? It is true that the difficulties were stupendous, but the population itself came to our assistance. Forty battalions were organized and disposed of in the areas that were considered to be the most threatened by Red partisans. These battalions defended the population not only against partisan pillage but from German marauders. The administration was put in our hands, and there was a deputy of the BCh president at every district commissar's office, without whom the commissar was not to take action in matters relating to local self-government. Indeed he could not, because he had at his disposal a few dozen policemen, and we had our armed battalions. The district commissars began to complain to the general commissar, who however told me not to pay any attention to them. He said that he now considered them unnecessary and that he had decided to send all of them to the front. The population sided with the Rada.

In April I started to tour the districts and to hold mass meetings, calling the partisans to come out of the woods and to return to peaceful endeavor together with their families. After such a meeting in the Slutsk district 4,500 partisans emerged, who, as had been promised, were not harmed. They were all issued documents by our police and settled with their families in the villages. The stream of volunteers continued to flow to the Belorussian Krai Defense, but there were not enough arms. At the same time an officers' school was opened in Minsk, which graduated 600 officers before evacuation.

On June 27, 1944, the second Belorussian congress was held at the Minsk Municipal Theater, attended by 1,039 delegates from all parts of Belorussia and emigrants from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. Of course they were not delegates elected in national elections, since the war time circumstances did not allow of this, but nonetheless they had been elected in their villages and cities and by Belorussian organizations. There were many peasants and laborers among them, as well as members of the intelligentsia and professional unions. I opened the congress and proposed the election of a presidium. A congress president was elected, a professor at the chemical institute Kipel, who had spent five years in a Soviet corrective labor camp.

Thereafter I delivered a report on the activities of the BCR, concluding with these words: The membership of the Rada is not complete because of the absence of delegates elected from the raions and volosts (districts), but we have not been able to do this. Therefore the Rada should be reorganized, but this will be your task. I consider that the BCR has carried out its mission successfully, and now the future fate of Belorussia is in your hands." Hearing these words, the six Germans from the Security Service and the general commissariat turned pale, because this had not been foreseen in the plan for the day. The congress president proposed the election of a Rada president, in view of the fact that the authority of the Rada had increased.

Only one candidate was put forward, Ostrovski, who was unanimously elected. The congress heard two reports on political themes and then adopted the following resolutions:

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1. Confirmation of the act of March 25, 1918, of the Council of the Belorussian National Republic, declaring Belorussia a free and sovereign power.
2. Nullification of all pacts and treaties concluded between Poland and the USSR without the participation of the Belorussian people.
3. To withhold recognition of any treaties made without the participation of the Belorussian people between the Polish government in exile in London and the USSR and bearing on Belorussia and the Belorussian people.
4. Recognition of the Belorussian Central Rada, headed by Prof. Ostrovski, as the only legal representative of the Belorussian people.

At the conclusion the orchestra played the Belorussian anthem, and of course it was decided to send a telegram to Hitler, since that was required procedure at the time.

The theater was guarded the whole time by the junkers of the Belorussian officers' school.

The next day the picture in the city had changed. The Bolsheviks had broken through near Borisov and the Germans were gradually beginning to evacuate. At 11 o'clock of the night of June 28 an orderly of Gen. Gottberg's called on me and told me to be ready to evacuate by three o'clock that night. I refused. Within 15 minutes Sepp came to me to ask the reason for my refusal. I said that before I left I would have to see to the evacuation of those serving under me and their families. He agreed of course and promised to let me have a train by 8 in the morning near Radu. He kept his word and at 10 in the morning of the 29th 800 people had been entrained. Bombs were falling and the Bolsheviks were advancing on Minsk. The train did not leave until 10 o'clock in the evening of June 29th. I decided to spend the night in Minsk to tend to the evacuation of those remaining, and I was not able to evacuate myself until June 30, but the route west had already been cut off. There remained only one chance to reach Vilna. I managed to get through two hours before the way to Vilna was completely cut off.

The Rada's Activities in the Emigration

The train with the BCR reached Königsberg safely and from there it went on to Berlin. Our battalions retreated from battle and most of them got to Germany. Here they were reorganized into the First Belorussian Division, which was commanded by Eigling, from SS Headquarters. The division was disposed in the Hirschau area of Bavaria. But the situation in Germany was growing worse every day. I visited the division on March 25th and at a meeting of officers I issued a secret order to establish contact with the allied command. In April this was done. Our division occupied a Rhein crossing and opened the way to the allies. For this service our division was taken prisoner by the Americans, and those who did not escape were later turned over to the Bolsheviks.

In January 1945 the Rada membership was filled out and new statutes were adopted. In the same month two groups of our partisans were dropped in the rear of the enemy lines, in the Nalibotskaya Forest (in the Molodachno area).

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They were 31 men in all. They had all undergone 6 months of training at a special school in Dalmits (near Insterburg). They, together with the BKA battalions that had not been able to break through, laid the basis for the partisan movement, which was however broken off in 1948 because of the impossibility of obtaining food and ammunition. Some of them went underground, laying the foundation for an underground liberation movement.

After Germany's capitulation, on Sept. 23-24, 1945, I called a plenary meeting of the BKA near Murburg and proposed that all overt activity of the BKA be suspended in view of the American policy of handing over collaborators to the Bolsheviks, and that a new organization be formed at the same time - the Belorussian National Center. The proposal was adopted and such a center was founded in Regensburg. I turned over to this organization all of the Bada funds with the exception of 43,000 RM, which were in a current account at the Sparkasse (savings account) in Bexter (?) in Westphalian. I was not able to obtain this money and it was left there.

At the time of the capitulation Abramchik was able to escape from Berlin and get to Paris and there, taking advantage of the temporary halt in the work of the BKA, he declared himself president of the Belorussian National Republic, on the basis of a mythical "testament" from the president of the historical Bada of the Belorussian National Republic. Secret preparations were being made among the Belorussian Catholics. Abramchik got into contact with one of the teachers at the Belorussian Gymnasium, Grishkevich, from the Anders corps, and then went to London where, with the help Grishkevich, he made contact with the Polish government in exile, with which he made some sort of agreement. As a result he received 300 pounds, which gave him the opportunity of expanding his activities. At the end of 1947 he came to Germany and, without the knowledge of any of the Belorussians, he assembled a small group that he organized into the Bada of the Belorussian National Republic. Of course this soon became known to almost everyone, and a delegation came to see me in the English zone with a request to resume the activities of the Bada. The request was made by V. Bagulya (the uncle of Major Bagulya) and Sobolevski. I agreed but at the same time I suggested that the BKA be reorganized on strictly democratic foundations. Everyone agreed and on May 8-10, 1948 a plenary session of the BKA was called in Elwangen, which was attended by:

1. All of the BKA members who had been confirmed by the 2nd congress (there were only a few of them left now);
2. The presidium of the 2nd congress;
3. The delegates to the 1st congress and members of the BKA;
4. Former delegates to the Polish Diet and senate from western Belorussia;
5. Two representatives each from the Greek Orthodox and other religious persuasions.
6. Delegates from the Belorussian Emigrant Representation, elected in democratic elections under the supervision of the IRO in Belorussian camps;
7. Representatives of all Belorussian organizations and political parties, regardless of their political orientation.

According to the statutes, this last group was to number no fewer than the total of all of the preceding groups.

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At present the membership of the BCR includes the following permanent Rada members:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. (Dr) N. Shchora | 14. Voitsekhovski |
| 2. Yu. Sobolevski | 15. Sv. Koush |
| 3. I. Kosyak | 16. Mikhail Zavistovich |
| 4. P. Orsa | 17. Mikhail Ignatovich |
| 5. (Prof) Dr. Stepanov | 18. (Maj.) Senka |
| 6. (Dr) N. A. Teodorovich | 19. (Dr) (vet) A. Pleskachevski |
| 7. A. Russak | 20. Stefan Kuda |
| 8. (Bishop) Afanasi | 21. (Dr) Arkadi Arekhva |
| 9. (Prof) N. Lapitski | 22. Cheslav Naidzyuk |
| 10. (Prof) Zharksi | 23. (Dr) Shuzeika |
| 11. Vasili Bagulya | 24. Prof. B. Suravyi |
| 12. Emanueli Yasyuk | 25. S. Shcherba |
| 13. (Lt. Col) A. Buglai | |
- Plus three or four others (I don't have a list with me)

There is at least an equal number of non-permanent members, who are delegated at each plenary session by the social organizations and political parties.

The Krivichi did not take part in the elections of 1948 because they could see that they would not obtain a majority. They also refused to join the coordination committee for political parties, although we invited them twice. They also refused to take part in the all-emigrant congress, the convocation of which I proposed in 1950, and again this year.

It is impossible at present to call a plenary session of the BCR, in view of the fact that the emigration is scattered in various western countries. We also lack the material means. In connection with this situation it has been decided to call a district plenary session in those areas where there are BCR members and members of Belorussian organizations in Sept. and Oct. of this year. Such local plenary sessions will be held in the USA, England, Germany, Canada, France, Spain, and Argentina.

The composition of the German plenary session will be about as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. P. Ostrovski | } Permanent members of the BCR |
| 2. (Dr) Teodorovich | |
| 3. M. Ignatovich | |
| 4. Ivan Zharski | |
| 5. Zabavski | |
| 6. (Dr) A. Arekhva | - representative for the delegation for the Am. zone. |
| 7. (Maj.) V. Senka | - representative for the delegation for the Brit. zone. |
| 8. (Col) Portlesnik | } The Union of Belorussian War Veterans (Combatants) |
| 9. (Maj.) Gokh | |
| 10. Mikhail Mayevski | } The Belorussian Independent Party |
| 11. S. Kiselevski | |

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12. *Y*Karpovich
 13. *Y*Mankou (w) - Belorussian party Vyisvalenya
 14. (I don't remember the name) - Belorussian National Gramada
 15. Lt. Col. L. *Y*Sarechnyi
 16. Col. A. *Y*Vysotski
 17. Lt. Col. *Y*Asachyi
 18. Capt. *Y*Verbitski
 19. *Y*Popko
 20. (Don't remember name)
- Plus two to three non-party people from camp committees.

Belorussian Vyisvolnyi Rukh

Belorussian Patriots (III force)

Of course others may be delegated from parties and organizations. It may also be that the Krivitski organizations will agree to send delegates, but I doubt it.

Munich, Aug. 22, 1952

R. Ostrovski

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ATTACH TO SIGMA

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One of the Resources in the Struggle against Bolshevism

According to a Russian proverb, if you want peace, you must prepare for war. Of course people do not want war, and every effort is being made to prevent it. However, there are some reactions, such as occur in chemistry, that it is impossible to prevent. The world, wanting peace, is nonetheless heading for war, which will undoubtedly come. The two opposed systems, democracy and communism, cannot co-exist.

This being the case, preparations must be made so that there will be as little human suffering as possible. It is not easy to conquer bolshevism. Armed force alone does not suffice, but neither does propaganda alone.

The feverish armament that is being carried on on a world wide scale shows that this phase will be dealt with as necessary. However, the other aspect is not altogether satisfactory. The broadcasts of the BBC and the Voice of America, telling about the poor conditions of the Soviet worker and kolkhoz member, cannot be considered effective propaganda. The workers and kolkhozniks themselves know about their lot better than they can be told. But if even the broadcasts were of interest to the listeners, it would be no guarantee that the people would be on our side. The outlook of the population is not enough - their views must be converted into action.

Hitler also went east with such propaganda, saying that he was not fighting against the Russian people, but against their bolshevik leaders. It may be objected that Hitler is not an example for the western democracies. But I have another example, among those western democracies, who not long ago turned over every fighter against bolshevism to the bolsheviks themselves, to be shot by them. It is true that this was a long time ago, and I am told that this was a mistake on the part of the West! But what guarantee is there that this mistake will not be repeated?

I have very fresh news from behind the Iron Curtain (July of this year), where anti-bolshevik underground workers who have penetrated the administrative apparatus pose the following questions: What will be the attitude of the Americans and English when they meet us in the uniforms of the MVD, the MGB, or the Polish secret police? Will they not act the same as the Germans did with the communists, who let themselves be taken prisoner, out of their desire to free themselves from bolshevism? Will they not regard us as ideological collaborators of Stalin and will they not send us into the cellars of the same MVD and UB (secret police), so that they can set up a Nuremberg trial and reward us with the gallows?

It is necessary in the first place to make the propaganda so convincing that it will be believed, and in the second place we must bring into play weapons that will convert the passive frame of mind into a dynamic element.

For the propaganda to be believed, it must issue from someone in whom the people believe and who has never betrayed them. The propaganda must issue from our blood brothers among oppressed peoples. It is unimportant

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that we were collaborators during the war, and it is utterly unimportant with whom we collaborated - Germans or devils. What is important is that we were never collaborators of Stalin and that we have fought against him without interruption. Under the German occupation all of the population collaborated to some extent. The teacher taught his own children, not those of the Germans, and the doctor treated his own people, not the Germans.

In addition to well conducted propaganda, we must be equipped with one more weapon, that being an underground anti-bolshevik movement over there. When we have organized underground cells in the entire territory of the USSR, who can at a moment's notice carry out an operational assignment - then, and only then, can it be said that the coming war will claim a minimum number of victims.

It is difficult to say whether this aim is capable of fulfillment. I don't know what the chances are in one or another area of the Soviet Union, but I know without any doubt that there is a possibility in Belorussia.

It has been established that by the western border of Poland, in the territory along the Oder-Nisa line, about 400,000 refugees from their native country have settled, many of whom have been able to establish legal residence and even to acquire rather important positions in the administrative apparatus. It has further been established that sections of the Belorussian battalions remaining there, which were engaged in partisan activities until 1948, have decided to go underground because of the impossibility of openly fighting the government's armed forces without ammunition, arms, and food. Contact has been established with some organized conspiratorial groups. It is of no importance how many of them there are - the important thing is that they exist.

They organized in the first place to be able to aid each other in acquiring legal existence. Their aim was purely practical. They all understand that the Poles lay claim to the territory of western Byelorussia and therefore their purpose is to utilize the initial chaos ensuing from the war between East and West to proceed, organized, to behind the Bug to defend their country from the Poles.

I am not at present prepared to say whether this idea is realistic, but theoretically it is possible, given proper elaboration and support, which unfortunately we lack.

Furthermore there are certain unconfirmed facts, according to which the chief of the Polish security service, Radkevich, has helped many Byelorussian partisans to get jobs in the militia or the secret police. This was supposed to have been at a time when they were already on the track of their former "criminal" activities. This seems improbable. On the other hand, we know with certainty that Radkevich is the same kind of Pole as Rokosovski. He is a Byelorussian, he went through the Vilna Pedagogical Seminary, and he was a teacher not far from Ivotsevichi. He was born in the village Radska in the Kossovski Uyezd. He taught at a Polish-Byelorussian bi-lingual school. The course on Polish politics was very subject to change, depending on who stood at the head of the government. One fine day the school authorities undertook

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a campaign against the Byelorussian schools and began to liquidate even the teachers of the Byelorussian language. Radkevich publicly protested against this. In connection with Radkevich's agitation for the Byelorussian school, he was, as is always the case in Poland, accused of being communist. The Polish court condemned him to three years in prison. When Radkevich was released from prison he emerged a communist and when, in 1939, the Soviets occupied Byelorussia, he became an active worker in the system. In 1941 Radkevich retreated to the East with the Bolsheviks. During the war he probably worked for the NKD.

It is perfectly clear to me now why Moscow sent Radkevich to Poland. The motivation was the same as that behind the appointment of Marshal Rokossovski. Moscow does not trust Warsaw, and Stalin was trying to put all responsible positions in the hands of his men, not Poles. But there are few people in Russia who know the Polish language and it was therefore necessary to turn to the Byelorussian element from western Byelorussia, which was in command of perfect Polish.

Actually Radkevich cannot be a friend of the Poles, who scoff at him as a Byelorussian prisoner. It is therefore not surprising that in Poland Radkevich is now counting on an element that is inimical to Poland, namely the active Byelorussian fighters from the partisan camp.

We Byelorussians are of course interested in the expansion of the Byelorussian underground movement not only in Poland, but principally in Byelorussia. I do not know whether it is possible to bring this action to Byelorussia, but that is what we must work toward.

The intelligence branches of every government must of course have their own agents in the territory of the countries in which they are interested. And although our aims are completely different, we are working along the same paths toward their achievement. This circumstance led me to turn to the intelligence service of the USA with the proposal that we unite our forces.

Of course this is only a proposal and requires detailed consideration and a cautious approach. Technicians must be trained and material means prepared and, most important of all, one or two men must be at hand to give instruction in the theater of operation.

According to reliable information at hand, the question of legalization is at present very difficult. It is possible to live there a few months in conspiratorial quarters, but it is almost impossible to become legalized.

However when we have legal posts there, there will be no need to have so many people. There is no need for more than two persons to instruct the local agents. They must be furnished with the necessary technical means for postal communication with this side and also with some means of travel over there. I say with some means, because the local forces in some places already have considerable resources for underground work, and this element is not mercenary but ideological. They will not work for dollars, but extensive work is not possible without dollars.

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